

IN THE CLAIMS:

1. (currently amended) A method for managing print jobs using a print subsystem despooling backplane, the method comprising:
 - accepting a print job at a print subsystem despooling backplane input interface;
 - calling a plurality of despooling backplane plugins;
 - converting the print job into an internal representation (IR) document that is independent of a printer device target and the language format associated with a printer device target;
 - storing the IR document in a shared data memory;
 - each plugin accessing the IR document in shared data memory;
 - generating a multiple processed IR document by using the plurality of plugins to perform an action selected from a group consisting of parallel processing the IR document, serially processing the IR document, and processing the IR document using a combination of parallel and serial processes;
 - converting the processed IR document into a processed print job; and,
 - supplying the processed print job at a despooling backplane output interface.

2. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein calling the plurality of despooling backplane plugins includes calling plugins chosen from the group including:
 - user-selected plugins;

predetermined plugins responsive to criterion such as printer driver, printer model, printer configuration, printer condition, user, administrative grouping, document content, and document type; and, plugins called from other plugins.

3. canceled

4. (currently amended) The method of claim [[3]] 1 wherein processing the IR document in response to the plurality of plugins includes performing a process selected from the group including translating the print job into an IR document, analyzing, modifying the print job data, modifying control of the print job, gathering print subsystem-external information related to the print job, producing print subsystem-external information related to the print job, setting print subsystem-external information related to the print job, and reassembling IR documents.

5. canceled

6. (previously presented) The method of claim 4 wherein reassembling IR documents includes removing conflicts between a plurality of processed IR documents; and,

wherein converting the processed IR document into a processed print job includes converting the plurality of IR documents into the processed print job.

7. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein accepting a print job at a print subsystem despooling backplane input interface includes accepting a print job in a first language format associated with a first printer device type;

wherein setting print subsystem-external information related to the print job includes selecting a second printer device type; and,

wherein converting the processed IR document into a processed print job includes converting the IR document into a processed print job in a second language format associated with the second printer device type.

8. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein gathering print subsystem-external information related to the print job includes monitoring a printer condition selected from the group including the availability of connected printing devices, currently printing print jobs, pending print jobs, completed print jobs, print job failures, printer performance, printer locality, and printer capabilities.

9. (original) The method of claim 8 wherein monitoring a printer condition includes:

querying a node selected from the group including a print subsystem spooler, a print subsystem port manager, a printer manager, a print service, and a printer; and,

maintaining a cache of printer condition information.

10. canceled

11. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein translating the IR document includes parsing spool/raster image processor (RIP) footers and headers, parsing a print job control header, and parsing language data selected from the group including raster, image, and page description language (PDL) data.

12. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein parsing a print job control header includes:

calling a plurality of printer job control header plugins selected from the group including printer job language (PJL) and job definition format (JDF) plugins; and,

using the print job control header plugin that recognizes the print job control header data.

13. (original) The method of claim 11 wherein parsing language data includes:

calling a plurality of language plugins selected from the group including raster, image, printer control language (PCL), portable document format (PDF), PostScript (PS), PCL XL, HP GL/2, IPDS, Escape P, SCS, and TIFF plugins; and,

using the language plugin that recognizes the language data.

14. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein analyzing the IR document includes performing an action selected from the group including job accounting, printer pooling, job splitting, access control, security, content filtering, resource downloading, compression, reformatting, and language translation.

15. (original) The method of claim 4 wherein gathering print subsystem-external information related to the print job includes gathering information selected from the group including a print subsystem host, a printer, a printer device manager, and a print service.

16. (currently amended) A print subsystem despooling backplane, the backplane comprising:

a library of despooling backplane plugins;

a controller having an interface to accept a print job, the controller converting the print job to an internal representation (IR) document that is independent of a printer device target and the language format associated with a printer device target, and supplying the IR document at an interface;

a shared data memory having an interface to accept the IR document;

a component processor having an interface to call a plurality of plugins from the library and an interface to accept the IR document accessed from the shared data memory, the component processor generating a multiple processed IR document by using the plugins to perform an action selected from a group consisting of parallel processing the IR document, serially processing the IR document, and processing the IR document using a combination of parallel and serial processes, converting the processed IR document into a processed print job, and supplying the processed print job at an interface.

17. (original) The backplane of claim 16 wherein the component processor calls plugins chosen from the group including:

user-selected plugins;

predetermined plugins responsive to criterion such as printer driver, printer model, printer configuration, printer condition, user, administrative grouping, document content, and document type; and,

plugins that are called from other plugins.

18. canceled

19. (currently amended) The backplane of claim [[18]] 16 wherein the component processor performs a process selected from the group including translating the print job into an IR document, analyzing, modifying the print job data, modifying control of the print job, gathering print subsystem-external information related to the print job, producing print subsystem-external information related to the print job, setting print subsystem-external information related to the print job, and reassembling IR documents.

20. canceled

21. (previously presented) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the component processor reassembles IR documents to remove conflicts between a plurality of processed IR documents and converts the plurality of IR documents into the processed print job.

22. (original) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the controller accepts a print job in a first language format associated with a first printer device type; and,

wherein component processor uses print subsystem-external information related to the print job to select a second printer device type and convert the IR document into a processed print job in a second language format associated with the second printer device type.

23. (original) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the component processor gathers print subsystem-external information related to the print job by monitoring a printer condition selected from the group including the availability of connected printing devices, currently printing print jobs, pending print jobs, completed print jobs, print job failures, printer performance, consumables, printer locality, and printer capabilities.

24. (original) The backplane of claim 23 wherein the component processor monitors a printer condition includes by:

querying a node selected from the group including a print subsystem spooler, a print subsystem port manager, a printer manager, a print service, and a printer; and,

storing the printer condition information in cache.

25. canceled

26. (original) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the component processor translates the print job into an IR document by

parsing spool/raster image processor (RIP) footers and headers, parsing a print job control header, and parsing language data selected from the group including raster, image, and page description language (PDL) data.

27. (original) The backplane of claim 26 wherein the component processor parses a print job control header by:

calling a plurality of printer job control header plugins selected from the group including printer job language (PJL), and job definition format (JDF); and,

using the print job control header plugin that recognizes the print job control header data.

28. (original) The backplane of claim 26 wherein the component processor parses the language data by:

calling a plurality of language plugins selected from the group including raster, image, printer control language (PCL), portable document format (PDF), PostScript (PS), and PCL XL, HP GL/2, IPDS, Escape P, SCS, and TIFF plugins; and,

using the language plugin that recognizes the language data.

29. (original) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the component processor analyzes the IR document by performing an action selected from the group including job accounting, job control, printer pooling, job splitting, access control, security, content filtering, resource downloading, compression, reformatting, and language translation.

30. (original) The backplane of claim 19 wherein the component processor gathers print subsystem-external information related to the print job by gathering information selected from the group including a print subsystem host, a printer, print service, and a printer device manager.